

Message Text

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PAGE 01 THE HA 01022 280949Z

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ACTION EUR-12

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TO USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

FOR IOR/M, IPS, IBS

SUBJECT: SUMMARY OF DUTCH MEDIA COVERAGE FROM JOURNALISTS TOUR

OSAF FOR I&L

THE COVERAGE THAT CAME OUT OF THE RECENT GENERAL DYNAMICS-
SPONSORED JOURNALIST TOUR TO THE U.S. WAS UNIFORMLY
POSITIVE FOR THE F-16.

1. FIRST REPORTAGE CAME IN A BRIEF RADIO PIECE FEB. 13
WHEN HAN HANSON OF VOLKSKRANT (CATHOLIC LABOR, LEFTIST)
STRINGING FOR NCRV RADIO REPORTED FROM EDWARDS: THE YF-16
HAS "A HUNDRED-TO-ONE ADVANTAGE" IN MATTER OF CHOICE TO
SUCCEED THE STARFIGHTER. HE SAID HE WAS VERY IMPRESSED
BY THE AIRCRAFT, AND ADDED THAT THE GENERAL DYNAMICS
PEOPLE REFERRED TO IT AS A REAL INFLATION FIGHTER, "IN
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PAGE 02 THE HA 01022 280949Z

THAT THE ENTIRE PURCHASE PRICE CAN BE EARNED BACK

LATER ON WITH FUTURE SALES".

2. A MOCK AIR DUEL OVER THE MOJAVE DESERT BETWEEN THE F-16 AND AN F-4 PHANTOM, COMBINED WITH AN INTERVIEW WITH F-16 PILOT JAMES RIDER RESULTED IN THE SINGLE LARGEST AMOUNT OF COVERAGE. ELSEVIERS MAGAZINE (RIGHT OF CENTER, INDEPENDENT) DESPITE AN UNFORTUNATE REFERENCE TO THE LOSING F-4 PHANTOM AS THE "F-15", BROUGHT HOME DRAMATICALLY THE F-16'S ABILITY TO TURN SHARPER THAN AND OUTMANEUVER ITS OPPONENT IN A DOGFIGHT. AND INTERVIEWS WITH THE PILOT JAMES RIDER, AND THEN LT. GEN. JAMES STEWART MADE ALL THE RIGHT POINTS (ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, LOWER COST--AND OF SPECIAL INTEREST FOR THE DUTCH, THE FIGHTER'S GOOD GROUND SUPPORT CAPABILITIES). DE TELEGRAAF (INDEPENDENT CONSERVATIVE) NETHERLANDS' BIGGEST MASS CIRCULATION DAILY, WHICH IS PRO US ON MOST ISSUES, BUT HAS TENDENCY TO SENSATIONALIZE AT TIMES GAVE SAME POSITIVE COVERAGE AS ELSEVIERS, BUT TOOK F-16 TEST PILOT RIDER'S "WHAT-IF" RESPONSE A STEP FURTHER AND CLAIMED THAT US HAS ACCEPTED DASSAULT'S CHALLENGE TO A MOCK AIR DUEL AGAINST THE MIRAGE. THIS WILL TAKE PLACE IN MAY, ACCORDING TO TELEGRAAF MAN WIM KROESE (PRESUMABLY AT THE PARIS AIR SHOW*). ARTICLE CLOSES WITH MENTION OF MEETING WITH AN AF MAJOR CLARKE WHO HAS VERY PLEASANT MEMORIES OF HIS DAYS AT SOESTERBERG AB IN THE NETHERLANDS.

3. DE TELEGRAAF FEB. 20 BROKE STORY THAT DASSAULT IN "A LAST ATTEMPT TO UNDERMINE F-16" HAS MADE INQUIRIES WITH PRATT AND WHITNEY ABOUT POSSIBILITY USING P AND W F-100 ENGINE IN ENTIRELY NEW FRENCH PLANE. "DASSAULT INTIMATES THAT NEW PLANE WOULD BE DESIGNED AND BUILT IN COOPERATION WITH FOKKER-VFW AND SAAB-SCANIA. (DASSAULT AND SAAB HAVE BEEN ENQUIRING FROM PRATT & WHITNEY WHETHER THE ENGINE IN QUESTION COULD BE CONSTRUCTED UNDER LICENCE IN EUROPE. IT WOULD OTHERWISE TAKE THE EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AT LEAST 5 YEARS AND COST BILLIONS OF GUILDERS TO DEVELOP AN ENGINE WITH THE SAME QUALITIES, ACCORDING TO PRATT & WHITNEY. P. & W. PRESIDENT, HARRY GRAY, IS STRONGLY IN FAVOR OF THE SALE OF THE ENGINE TO EUROPE, BECAUSE THE US WOULD THEN HAVE THE ASSURANCE THAT EUROPE WOULD

UNCLASSIFIED

PAGE 03 THE HA 01022 280949Z

NEVER BE ABLE TO TACKLE AN ENGINE SCHEME OF SUCH MAGNITUDE, AND HE SAYS THAT IT NOW DEPENDS ON WASHINGTON WHETHER A PERMIT WILL BE GIVEN. DASSAULT NOW PROPOSES THAT HOLLAND AND BELGIUM COULD AS INTERIM SOLUTION TO THE REPLACEMENT OF SOME OF THE 'STARFIGHTERS' BETWEEN 1979 AND 1981 TAKE THE 'MIRAGE' AND THE 'VIGGEN', WHICH COULD LATER BE EXCHANGED FOR THE NEW 'PLANE.'
CHAPMAN

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